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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

**MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS: IDENTIFYING  
AND MITIGATING MILITARY-MEDIA BIASES  
TO IMPROVE FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS**

by

Shawn A. Bohrer

March 2003

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**MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS: IDENTIFYING AND  
MITIGATING MILITARY-MEDIA BIASES TO IMPROVE  
FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS**

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Lieutenant, United States Navy  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

A noticeable civil-military gap has emerged in American society where the public does not fully understand the mission of the military, and the military does not understand the expectations and demands by the public in a liberal democracy. Maintaining a good rapport with the media and not fostering a civil-military gap will allow the public to embrace ‘good news’ stories that are introduced by the military as well as accept the times when a negative story breaks the news. Cooperating with the media by allowing appropriate access to the military is vital to effective information operations.

This research identifies instances of failure in military-media relationships by reviewing the historical relationship between the media and military in wartime as well as two examples in the last 15 years in which the Navy has mishandled newsworthy events—the 1989 explosion aboard the USS IOWA and the 2001 collision between the submarine, USS GREENEVILLE and the Japanese fishing trawler, *Ehime Maru*. The purpose of this project is to determine and ultimately to mitigate military bias against the media.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE

*I looked on it (the press) as a problem to be managed. I did not look on the press as an asset, in doing what I had to do. Maybe that's just sort of the natural order of things between the government and the press. But it was so important, especially in connection with the Gulf conflict, where the possibility existed of a long-term, sustained kind of operation where the stakes were enormous, I felt that it was important to try to manage that relationship in a way so the press didn't screw us...*

—Richard B. Cheney, Secretary of Defense during Desert Shield/Storm<sup>1</sup>

*I think that I was shaped, as much as anything, by Vietnam, and as far as the press/military relationship is concerned, I walked away with a very sour taste in my mouth, that something had gone badly wrong in that relationship.*

—GEN (Ret.) John Shalikashvili, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff<sup>2</sup>

These statements, from two senior U.S. defense officials, expose a bias, or predisposition against the news media (the press.)<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this thesis is to research the evolution of this bias in general and to develop survey questions designed to identify root causes of this bias in junior military officers in particular.

The military is not alone here; bias exists on both sides of the military-media relationship. While the military may appear to not understand the public's expectations and information requirements in a democracy, many media personnel equally misunderstand the military culture and military concern for operational security. Patrick Pexton, Reporter for *The Navy Times* explained,

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<sup>1</sup> From an interview conducted January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995 by VADM (Ret.) William P. Lawrence and Frank Aukofer published in *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*.

<sup>2</sup> From an interview conducted December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1994 by VADM (Ret.) William P. Lawrence and Frank Aukofer published in *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*.

<sup>3</sup> The American news media encompasses printed journals, newspapers, news magazines, radio, and television. Hereafter, the news media will simply be referred to as "the media."

The military is intent on controlling information and worse, controlling the spin, the angle, far more than any politician I've ever covered. I have had public affairs officers lie to me frequently and they seem to do so more as they rank higher in their careers.<sup>4</sup>

The imperfect relationship between the military and the media during 1990-91's Operation Desert Shield/Storm is illustrated in Figure 1. As the cartoon depicts, the message that the military wanted the American public, and to some extent the enemy, to receive was pre-packaged, innocuous information designed to satisfy natural intellectual curiosity about the war effort, while maintaining the utmost operational security. As exemplified earlier by Mr. Cheney, many senior military officers in Desert Shield/Storm still held the belief that the media were one of the principle reasons for the United States losing the Vietnam War and felt that if they could control the media, then they would not have to fear the massive public criticism that came after the 1968 Tet Offensive.



Figure 1. DOONESBURY © cartoon portraying military public affairs officer tactics during 1991 Persian Gulf War.<sup>5</sup>

Meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships between the media and the military are vital to the existence of a democratic society. An adequately informed populace can more effectively communicate their desires to their elected officials but to be adequately

<sup>4</sup> From comments submitted with survey conducted by VADM (Ret.) William P. Lawrence and Frank Aukofer published in *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*.

<sup>5</sup> DOONESBURY © G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved.

informed, the populace requires accurate information. The U.S. population receives a majority of their information through the media; therefore it behooves the military to provide the public, through the media, with the most timely and accurate information that security will allow. This thesis will provide a means of identifying factors that contribute to creating a bias in U.S. Navy officers against the media. Once identified, these factors can be mitigated and, hopefully, the timely and accurate information necessary to maintaining a strong democracy will be available to the American public.

## **B. AREA OF RESEARCH**

This thesis reviews several cases to highlight instances where the U.S. military have fallen short in terms of providing timely and accurate information to the American public and thereby aiding the creation of bias between the military and the media. The American Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, and Desert Storm help detail the maturation and decline of the military-media relationship. Two specific examples, the USS IOWA explosion and the USS GREENEVILLE collision with a Japanese fishing trawler, detail instances in which the U.S. Navy appears to have mishandled information in significant news events. Although these instances were not associated with military operations with direct impact on U.S. national security, they highlight events that, when mishandled, contribute to biases that could have detrimental effects on future operations that do impact national security.

Following the review, this thesis will introduce survey questions designed to identify any existing biases held by U.S. Navy officers against the media and, if biases exist, help identify the sources or factors contributing to their development.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1. Primary Research Question**

Are U.S. Navy officers biased against the news media?

### **2. Subsidiary Research Questions**

a) What are criteria for measuring military-media bias?

- b) Are there historical case studies that show a trend in this relationship?
- c) What are root causes of this bias?

#### D. METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

The thesis begins with an historical overview of the relationship between the military and the media. This will show how media personnel have become integrated with military units to obtain information for publication. It will also highlight some of the historical “ups” and “downs” in the military-media relationship, which are readily visible in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Military-Media Relationships (From: Moskos’s *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*)<sup>6</sup>

<i>Military-Media Variable</i>	<i>Pre-Vietnam*</i>	<i>Post-Vietnam**</i>	<i>Operations Other Than War***</i>
<b>Attitude of military toward press</b>	Friendly	Hostile	Apprehensive
<b>Attitude of press toward military</b>	Friendly	Skeptical	Distant
<b>Access to military</b>	Part of unit	Pools	Intermittent
<b>Military control of media</b>	High	Medium	Low
<b>Focus on non-military entities, e.g. NGOs, inter-agencies, DoD, and contract civilians</b>	Low	Medium	High
<b>Media perception of military relationship</b>	Incorporated	Manipulated	Courted
<b>Media reliance on military for communications technology</b>	Totally	Partially	Independent
<b>When the story ends</b>	Shooting stops	Troops go home	Media go home

\* e.g. World War II, Korean War

\*\* e.g. Grenada, Panama, Gulf War

\*\*\* e.g. Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Bosnia

Table 1 keenly illustrates the warm relationship that was present before the Vietnam War, the low-point that occurred after Vietnam, and the general ambivalence that the military felt towards the media through and after Desert Storm. The censorship

<sup>6</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 12.

that allowed a good relationship to foster during World War II was not present in Vietnam, and coupled with a generation of reporters that were more willing to question and criticize the war effort, the relationship between the media and the military suffered, and was illustrated during the Gulf War, as many of the young lieutenants of Vietnam were now the generals commanding the allied coalition.

Noticing in Table 1 that when the media were incorporated (embedded) into military units, the relationship was generally good—the media were friendly to the military and vice versa—the relationship between today’s military and media may be coming around full circle. In the current conflict in the Persian Gulf region, Operation Iraqi Freedom, media assets are embedded into military units, reporting action from the front lines, just as reporters had done in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. While the media are different, views of fighting being transmitted into American homes via satellite telephones, e-mail, and the internet, the bond that is being fostered by the media making the same sacrifices in the field, could possibly do much to finally mend the relationship between the media and military that was so badly broken during the Vietnam War and festered during subsequent conflicts (Grenada, Panama, and Desert Storm). This thesis, through the implementation of a survey directed towards the Unrestricted Line Officers<sup>7</sup> (URL) in the Navy, will explore the status of the current military-media relationship.

Secondly, two case studies will be examined in which the U.S. Navy seemed to mishandle the media and information during newsworthy events: the explosion aboard the USS IOWA in 1989 and the collision between the submarine USS GREENEVILLE and a Japanese fishing trawler in 2001. The Navy, which historically has shown a tendency to shy away from the media when faced with potentially embarrassing news coverage<sup>8</sup>, dismally failed at keeping the public informed of developments in these cases, and subsequently, the American public received the editorialized versions from the media.

---

<sup>7</sup> An Unrestricted Line Officer in the Navy are those officers who are eligible for command at sea (surface Warfare Officers, Aviators, and Submariners).

<sup>8</sup> Reed, Fred. Navy Has Self to Blame for Bad Press. *Navy Times*, September 12, 1988, p 78.

Finally, the thesis proposes a survey, briefly mentioned above, to identify bias against the media within the Navy's officer corps. The survey questions were collected from the *Triangle Institute for Security Studies Survey on the Military in the Post—Cold War Era* and a survey commissioned by the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation and conducted by the Gallup Organization in 1999 as part of the Catigny Conference Series. Data collected from this survey will support analysis to determine:

1. Whether there is a bias in the U.S. Navy officer corps towards the media.
2. When that bias, if it exists, develops in the course of an officer's career?
3. What other demographic factors might influence the bias?
4. What efforts and courses of action can be taken to mitigate that bias and improve the Navy's ability to adequately inform the U.S. public while maintaining appropriate operations security?

The questions selected from the Triangle Institute's survey will also collect demographic data from the survey respondents. The questions developed by the McCormick Tribune Foundation will assess the existence of bias. The 1999 Gallup poll, from which the majority of the survey questions were selected, limited military respondents to senior military officers (i.e., flag rank.) This study will poll all of the officer ranks to identify if there is a correlation in demographics to the existence of bias.

For the purpose of the survey, only Unrestricted Line Officers will be polled. The Navy URL officer represents the demographic of Navy officials most sought by the media for information regarding military events, therefore, if a negative media bias exists in this demographic it is most likely to cause the information flow from the military to the public (through the media) to be corrupted.

## **E. BENEFITS OF STUDY**

Although this thesis focuses on a single demographic within a single service (Unrestricted Line Officers in the U.S. Navy) the results provide a methodology applicable to all military and government branches as a means of identifying bias between the military and the media. The media play a pivotal role in American society

and should be duly considered in all aspects of military planning. The media are the primary conduit of information from the military to the public. It is through this conduit that the public will see the military as competent defenders of U.S. national security or as a bungling, aloof organization more interested in self-preservation than defending America.



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## **II. EVOLUTION OF MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS**

### **A. THE MEDIA AND THE MILITARY**

#### **1. Introduction**

Historically, advances in communications, transportation and weapon systems have had profound impacts on military organization, strategy and doctrine. The evolution of mass communications through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is no exception. Although the media and mass communications exist exclusive of the military, they impact the way militaries conduct operations. This historical background will provide insight and perspective into the evolution of the military-media relationship and the implications of positive and negative biases between these entities.

A noticeable rift has emerged between the military and the media since the burgeoning of mass media and speedy telecommunications. The media bring the front lines of war to the homes of the American public in an effort to satiate the public's desire to be informed. The media view is that all available information should be provided to the public so they can make the best decisions. The information provided by the media, however, is not only consumed by the American public but by both sides of the conflict. The military therefore disagrees with the media on what the public needs to know. The military do not want all available information broadly disseminated and so appear to be hoarding the information the media wish to obtain. Coupled with this is the apparent push by editors and other media 'gateways' to only pursue scandals and demeaning stories and this has caused a general bias amongst the military that the media is not on their side.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these differences the media and the military co-exist and have had a long-standing relationship. The media have been instrumental in educating the public about the military and keeping them abreast of the role of the military in the realm of world politics and the furthering of American interests abroad. However, the media are not being utilized to the fullest benefit by the military.

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<sup>9</sup> Ethiel, Nancy. 2000. *The Military and the Media: Public Perceptions*. Chicago, Ill.: Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, p 55.

A rift between the military and the media prevents the military from reaching the public with its own story. Fostering a healthy and mutually understanding relationship with the media has big advantages for the military, so long as the media also appreciate and respect the necessity of national security and the effects their far-reaching message can have on strategy and operations. The military-media relationship has been, for the most part, mutually beneficial. In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution<sup>10</sup> guarantees freedom of the press, yet during warfare it has always been necessary to limit this freedom for reasons of military secrecy and security.

The noted war theorist Carl von Clausewitz states that popular support is a main factor in achieving strategic success on the battlefield.<sup>11</sup> With the ability of the news media to keep the public immediately informed of events around the globe, popular support is more critical than ever for today's military commanders. To this end, both the news media and the officer corps of America's military must do more to understand each other. Recent trends in the media coverage of armed conflicts have shown a tendency for military commanders to either not understand the purpose of the news media in modern warfare or have not been prepared to utilize the media as a valuable resource in winning popular support at home.

The following paragraphs will address the changing face of war brought on by mass communications and explore the maturation of the military-media relationship from the American Civil War to World War II, the pinnacle of a healthy military-media relationship. This is followed by a look at the subsequent deterioration of that relationship starting in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and continuing to the present day.

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<sup>10</sup> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. The Constitution of the United States of America As Amended. 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2d Session, House of Representatives. Document No. 106-214. U.S. Government Printing Office Washington DC: 2000. P.13

<sup>11</sup> von Clausewitz, Carl. 1976. *On War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p 363.

## 2. Changing the Face of War

US military doctrine for Joint Operations describes new challenges that stem from the changing context for the use of force:

Combatant commanders may confront a variety of factors that challenge the stability of countries and regions and threaten US national interests and security within their areas of responsibility. These instabilities can lead to increased levels of competition, a wide variety of attempts at intimidation, drug trafficking, insurgencies, regional conflicts, weapons proliferation, and civil war. **It is difficult to predict which nations or groups may threaten US interests and how and when such threats will emerge.** Yet such predictions should be attempted, and with a process that allows for rapid dissemination of strategic estimates.

When other instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, and informational) are unable or inappropriate to achieve national objectives or protect national interests, **the US national leadership may decide to conduct large-scale, sustained combat operations to achieve national objectives or protect national interests, placing the United States in a wartime state.** In such cases, the goal is to win as quickly and with as few casualties as possible, achieving national objectives and concluding hostilities on terms favorable to the United States and its multinational partners.

Operations other than war are an aspect of military operations that focus on deterring war and promoting peace.

**Military operations other than war (MOOTW) involving the use or threat of force.** When other instruments of national power are unable to influence a deteriorating or potentially hostile situation, military force may be required to demonstrate US resolve and capability, support the other instruments of national power, or terminate the situation on favorable terms. The general goals of US military operations during such periods are to support national objectives, deter war, and return to a state of peace. Such operations involve a greater risk that US forces could become involved in combat than operations conducted to promote peace.

**Military operations other than war not involving the use of threat or force.** Prudent use of military forces in peacetime helps keep the day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict and maintains US influence in foreign lands. These operations, by definition, do not involve combat, but military forces always need to be prepared to protect themselves and respond to a changing situation.<sup>12</sup>

Not long ago, threats to the United States' national security could easily be generalized into the countries that made up the Communist Bloc (WARSAW PACT

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<sup>12</sup> Joint Publication 3-0: Doctrine for Joint Operations. Executive Summary, p vii.

nations.) With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the nature of national threats changed. Previous doctrine was concerned with a possible massive Soviet invasion through the Fulda Gap in Europe; however, the threats to United States' national objectives and interests in the post-Cold War era are ambiguous and regionally focused.

Current American military doctrine refers to operations at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict as Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). MOOTW require high levels of public support since the purpose for US involvement is sometimes vague. Most people are not readily able to understand how, for instance, the inability to get humanitarian aid to a starving population is a US national objective (as in Somalia).

Table 2. Armed Forces in the Three Eras: The United States (From: Moskos's *The Postmodern Military*)<sup>13</sup>

<i>Forces Variable</i>	<i>Modern (Pre-Cold War) 1900-1945</i>	<i>Late Modern (Cold War) 1945-1990</i>	<i>Postmodern (Post-Cold War) Since 1990</i>
<b>Perceived Threat</b>	Enemy Invasion	Nuclear War	Subnational (e.g., ethnic violence, terrorism)
<b>Force Structure</b>	Mass army, conscription	Large professional army	Small professional army
<b>Major Mission Definition</b>	Defense of homeland	Support of alliance	New missions (e.g., peacekeeping, humanitarian)
<b>Public Attitude toward Military</b>	Supportive	Ambivalent	Indifferent
<b>Media Relations</b>	Incorporated	Manipulated	Courted
<b>Conscientious Objection</b>	Limited or prohibited	Routinely permitted	Subsumed under civilian service

Table 2, illustrates the changes in threats, attitudes, and force structure with regards to the United States' armed forces. The trend of our forces is toward smaller and much smarter compositions, while the threat has become more complex and infers that the threat in any conflict can never be absolutely discounted. Of special note are the attitudes of the civilian populace and the military media relationship. The notice of the public's once supportive attitude towards the military to their current feeling of

<sup>13</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

indifference, supports the existence of a civil-military gap that was highlighted all the more by former Secretary of Defense William Cohen stating that:

A chasm...developing between the military and civilian worlds, where the civilian world doesn't fully grasp the mission of the military, and the military doesn't understand why the memories of our citizens and civilian policy-makers are so short, or why the criticism is so quick and unrelenting.<sup>14</sup>

The military-media relationship, as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 and detailed in the following paragraphs, has been in a state of flux since the end of World War II. World War II marked a high point and set the benchmark for a mutually supportive military-media relationship. Reporters were granted unfettered access to the troops on the front lines and commanders were comfortable with discussing the concepts of military operations with media personnel. The commander's knew that if the newsman inadvertently breached security in a report, the security review teams would intercept the dispatch prior to public dissemination. While this was censorship - pure and simple - the trust that was built between soldiers and the media allowed the military to get their story out and for the media to sell theirs. During the Vietnam conflict however, this structure and the good relationship broke down.

In Vietnam reporters were still permitted access to the soldiers and battlefields, but the media felt they were being used as a conduit of misinformation distributed by the U.S. military and government to generate and maintain public support for the war. Following this breakdown in trust the military have tried to learn from the lessons of Vietnam, and have started to realize the importance and role of the media in society and the necessity of incorporating the media into all facets of combat operations.

The poor planning by senior defense and government officials to incorporate the media into military operations only fomented the chasm that was created in Vietnam and marred conflicts after Vietnam. Botched attempts at limited press pools and pre-packaged media coverage of aerial bombardments during press briefings did little to satiate the media's desire, and right, to keep the public adequately informed of the military's performance.

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<sup>14</sup> Cohen, William. From 1997 speech at Yale University.

### **3. Concept of Social Contract**

The rise of an urban industrial class at the outset of the Industrial revolution encouraged others to share in national and imperial glory. British citizens were readily willing to abrogate their rights, including that of the free press, if it meant survival during war (as in the Battle for Britain in World War II.) Western liberal democracies have held to the 19<sup>th</sup> century principle that describes the social contract to be “any [that] was designed to protect the nation was a ‘just’ war on both philosophical and religious grounds. As such it was not to be challenged [from neither civilian nor government perspectives].”<sup>15</sup>

This social contract still holds that it is the natural duty of the citizen and the media (being made up of citizens) to rally in defense of what is claimed to be the common interests of security and survival of a state in any conflict. This tenant is demonstrated repeatedly in historical review of the military-media relationship in the next section. The question then becomes whether this contract will carry through to future conflicts or if a transformation in the social contract is inevitable. The review of the past should provide a hint of the roadmap for the future.

## **B. A HISTORY IN REVIEW**

### **1. Early Wartime Reporting: 1850-1865**

One of the first professional war correspondents, William Howard Russell of the London *Times*, demonstrated the inherent power and problems in modern day war reporting and is credited with being the first war correspondent to influence events on the battlefield as well as on politics.<sup>16</sup> Russell recorded the incredible hardships of troops in the long siege before Sebastopol. He chronicled the ill-preparedness and poor equipment of troops as well as the suffering they endured at hospitals. He was the first to foray into the gray area of operational security – specifically, the problem of determining the

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<sup>15</sup> Jesser, Peter and Peter Young. *The Media and the Military: From the Crimea to Desert Strike*. St. Martin's Press: New York, NY, 1997, p 8.

<sup>16</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 4.

difference in reporting news versus jeopardizing operational security during combat operations.

Russell was a pioneer in bearing the brunt of official displeasure when breaking unwelcome news. This period saw the rise of war reporting censorship by the government. Military commanders allied with journalists for the career benefits of both parties and the glory of having their exploits publicized. Journalists benefited by being privy to exclusive news stories and being afforded the opportunity to further their careers and military commanders were able to achieve fame by having accounts of battles recorded in print.

## **2. The First American War Correspondents: The American Civil War**

Military coverage of the American military began with about twenty reporters on hand for the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861, and saw those gathered correspondents fleeing with the Union Army.<sup>17</sup> The advent of the telegraph saw that information could be transferred faster than ever before and sparked fears that the information might be transferred to the enemy. An unabashed press hater, General William Tecumseh Sherman, said he would willingly agree to give half his pay to have his name kept out of the newspapers, and he took all the steps he could to try to prevent correspondents from traveling with him, including the threat to treat them as spies.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the improvement or introduction of communications, photography, newspaper production and distribution saw an increase in information distribution and a public appetite for war reporting. As a result, it did not take long for antagonism to develop between the American military and media. With an increasing appetite for current news from the front lines of battle, correspondents were increasingly under pressure from their editors to provide up to date news stories to increase circulation. However, with the possibility of being fired for not sending in any news, fabricated stories were not uncommon, and correspondents' dispatches to editors "were frequently inaccurate, often invented, partisan, and inflammatory."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 18.

<sup>18</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 28.

<sup>19</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 21.



The most significant precedent to be set during the Civil War was formalized censorship and the implementation of the issuance of daily war bulletins. With many of the telegraph portals near the front lines under military control, censorship of correspondents' dispatches to their respective organizations became the norm, and when in 1864 the War Department began issuing daily war bulletins, the military was able to exercise control over the press, a practice still evident with today's news briefings staged by senior Department of Defense officials.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Golden Age of War Reporting: 1865-1914

The years from 1865-1914 were labeled as the "Golden Age" of defense reporting.<sup>21</sup> The leading publications followed the profitable economic trail of war reporting based in the sure knowledge that war generated circulation.<sup>22</sup> This was also a period that saw technology develop, enabling reporters to spread their news farther and better through advances in cable communications, photography, and early cinematography.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently, an increase in the impetus of getting the story to the public sacrificed the accuracy and quality of reporting.

### 4. The Great War of 1914-1918: Under the Guise of Patriotism

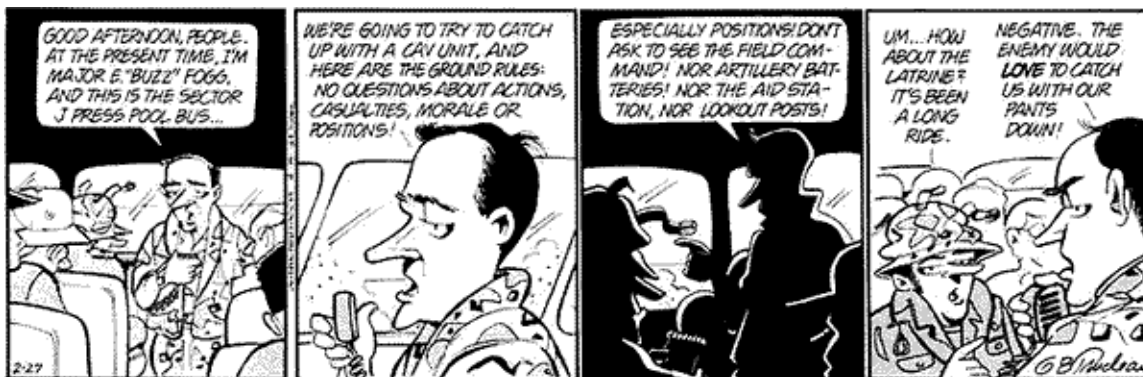


Figure 2. DOONESBURY © cartoon depicting press coverage during 1991 Persian Gulf War.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 18.

<sup>21</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 42.

<sup>22</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 23.

<sup>23</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 42.

<sup>24</sup> DOONESBURY © G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved. A 'unilateral' is a news correspondent who ventured into the battle zone without a military escort, outside of the press pool.

During World War I the relationship between the military and the media continued to come together, as policies were implemented to incorporate the media into military operations. Members of the press, after being accredited by the War Department, were issued uniforms and given the honorary status of captain. The reporters identified with the soldiers and not surprisingly, they painted senior military officials and commanders in favorable light.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the progress that came with the incorporation of the media into military operations, standards of censorship and access were also taken to new levels. President Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information asked newspapers to refrain from printing "advance reports about troop strengths, troop and ship movements, anti-aircraft defenses and harbor defenses."<sup>26</sup> Congress enacted some of the most severe restrictions to prevent publication of information that could offer aid to the enemy or interfere with American military operations or war production, as well as forbidding critics of the United States government or American military forces.<sup>27</sup> Figure 2, a cartoon depicting a public Affairs Officer in the Gulf War, satirizes the extremes that militaries go to maintain operational security. This overzealous nature on the part of the United States military would later prove detrimental to the relationship between the military and the media, as the media felt that they were not being granted reasonable access to front line soldiers.

## **5. World War II: The High Point of the Military-Media Relationship**

World War II set the benchmark for relations between the media and the military. Much like the current conflict in Iraq, the media were embedded into front line units and a symbiotic relationship was fostered. Reporters were immersed into soldiers' daily routines and mutual trust allowed for candid conversation between soldiers and the media, while set guidelines, and censors if needed, prevented reporters from dispatching

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<sup>25</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 19.

<sup>26</sup> Klein, Michael W. *The Censor's Red Flair, the Bomb's Bursting in Air: The Constitutionality of the Desert Storm Media Restrictions*. *Hastings Constitutional Law*, Summer 1992, 19: 1044.

<sup>27</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 39.

information that could harm the war effort. In some instances, reporters stood up for military censorship, such as when Associated Press (AP) correspondent, Edward Kennedy, prematurely reported the German Surrender at Reims, France on May 7, 1945. Having broken an agreement with Army public relations to withhold news of the surrender as condition to his inclusion in the small press pool detailed to cover the surrender, he subsequently lost his accreditation and was ultimately fired by AP. Kennedy's peers ultimately sided with the military, condemning his efforts to violate the rules and guidelines of the press pool to obtain his scoop.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the patriotism that was characteristic of the nation during World War II was prevalent in the media corps and subsequently contributed to a very positive military-media relationship.

The patriotic fervor that engrossed the nation and led to unprecedented war production by any nation also rallied the media in support of the Allied cause. During this time, the United States government set up two parallel agencies to deal with public information. These organizations served to check and balance each other —the Office of War Information, which helped to publicize the war effort on the home front, and the self explanatory Office of Censorship.<sup>29</sup> Just as in World War I, the federal government accredited correspondents in theater, basically meaning that the reporters agreed to censorship.

Censorship was almost absolute in World War II; most journalists understood the undermining principle behind censorship, which was to not offer the enemy any information that could be harmful to the Allied war effort. This censorship enabled a more open relationship between military officials and correspondents. Because all reports were subject to military review before being dispatched, officers felt free to discuss sensitive materials with reporters, knowing that their frankness and candor could help the newsman tell the story, without compromising the war effort.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Liebling, A.J. "The A.P. Surrender", in Library of America, *Reporting World War II, Part Two 1944-1946*. Library of America: New York, NY, 1995, pp 733-743.

<sup>29</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 19.

<sup>30</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 20.

As during World War I, the American media in World War II identified with the soldiers and their cause. Often enduring the same conditions as the troops, the media felt, and the feeling was reciprocated, that they too were making a sacrifice to keep the American public informed and energized about the war effort.<sup>31</sup> Unique to World War II were special combat correspondents, which debuted during this war. These volunteers, typically journalists before the war, enlisted in the military and attended regular Marine training, after which they would participate or observe military action, to be processed for release by the Navy Department.<sup>32</sup>

Technology was also a driving factor in coverage of the military during this time. Radio brought the front lines of battle into American homes faster than ever. However, much as the military controlled the telegraph stations near the front lines during the Civil War, they also had control over the communications equipment through which correspondents submitted their stories. Consequently, many news reports were dispatched back home in a neutral voice, which could be carried by many different news organizations and outlets. This was a precursor to the press pools that would be implemented in the 1980s.

## **6. The Korean Conflict: The Military-Media Relationship in Flux**

Just five years after the end of World War II, the United Nations began a police action on the Korean Peninsula to thwart the invasion of communist forces from North Korea into its southern neighbor, South Korea.<sup>33</sup> What made the Korean War different from its predecessors was that at the outset of the war, no censorship was imposed on the news media, and they were free to write and dispatch their stories so long as they voluntarily censored themselves, based on their own guidelines,<sup>34</sup> so long as their reporting would not deteriorate morale or cause embarrassment to the United States or its

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<sup>31</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 20.

<sup>32</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 39.

<sup>33</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 336.

<sup>34</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 39.

allies.<sup>35</sup> As in World War II, reporters were granted unfettered access to the front lines, as they were integrated into units, and were able to report back to the American public the real experiences of war, both the innocuous and the horrific.

The freedom that journalists enjoyed in reporting news on the war in Korea began to fade away relatively quickly. Within a month of the war's onset, General Douglas MacArthur was calling on the correspondents to understand their role in psychological warfare with the enemy.<sup>36</sup> With the ground rules already vastly different from their previous experiences (full censorship during WWII), the news media found themselves wishing that full censorship would be imposed so as to have established firm guidelines by which they could report. With a war that was not going as smoothly as anticipated, the voluntary code under which reporters censored themselves came to include any criticism of the United Nations' military commanders and the conduct of Allied soldiers in the battlefield.<sup>37</sup>

When the United Nation Forces began to push through North Korea and up to Chinese Manchuria the military situation drastically changed. Chinese ground troops were committed to support the North Korean troops and the UN forces began to get pushed back across the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. With the war effort not going so well for the U.N., the feeling amongst the military commanders was that the fewer news correspondents around—the better. MacArthur's press chief even went so far as to make the media's living accommodations and their ability to dispatch stories difficult so as to discourage their presence.<sup>38</sup>

The voluntary censorship imposed upon the news media in Korea ultimately resulted in some operational security leaks, but it was the criticism of the war effort that finally brought forth the Department of Defense imposing censorship on the media. Censorship, when finally imposed, went well beyond the scope of operational security, preventing stories that might deplete morale or cause embarrassment to the United

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<sup>35</sup> Olson, Karl T. The Constitutionality of Department of Defense Press Restrictions on Wartime Correspondents Covering the Persian Gulf War. *Drake Law Review*, 41: 518.

<sup>36</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 337.

<sup>37</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 337.

<sup>38</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 338.

Nations' forces.<sup>39</sup> With full censorship now in place, and the UN forces up against China—a more formidable enemy than North Korea—the military began micro-managing the media coverage and sent the relationship between the news media and the military into a tailspin.

As the war dragged on, and with no apparent progress being made by either side, the press began to step back from front line coverage and examine the morality and purpose of the war. When South Korean soldiers did not seem to want to fight when faced with battle many began asking whether Korea was even worth saving.<sup>40</sup> Wanting to ask the hard questions about war and its purpose, the media's reports began to irritate the military and political leaders and tested the extent of their reporting freedoms.

## **7. Vietnam: The Low Point in the Military-Media Relationship**

Whereas World War II marked a high point in the military-media relationship, the trend that was started in the Korean War, with the correspondents covering the conflict beginning to question the morality of wars obscured by political mire, carried over into the Vietnam war, and culminated in the low point in the military-media relationship. Correspondents were granted unfettered access to the military and were never subject to censorship during the course of the war. The military, however, while trying to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people, fell miserably short of winning the hearts and minds of the people back in the United States as well as those of the Vietnamese.

The political situation that precipitated United States involvement in Vietnam created a different story line than what was present in World War II. Hitler's quest to conquer Europe created a clear and decisive distinction between good and evil. Under the premise of stopping the spread of communism and containing China, the United States came to the aid of France and supported the Diem government in South Vietnam, hoping to preserve the French colonial aspirations in Indochina.

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<sup>39</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN. 1995. p 39.

<sup>40</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 338.

At the outset of the war, many correspondents were convinced, just as the military leadership was, that the war could be won and that it was being fought for a justifiable cause—to prevent the spread of communism. But Vietnam was a different kind of war that required a different kind of reporting than that conducted in past wars. “It was an interdisciplinary war, where complex political issues intruded on the military aspects, where battle success was necessary but where battle success alone was insufficient, a war where unwarranted optimism, propaganda, and news management could deeply obscure the issue.”<sup>41</sup> As the war dragged on the military leadership was unable to convince the media, and ultimately the American public, that the war effort was working. The media began to report the war as it was being played out—complete with details of corruption in the Diem government, accounts of atrocities carried out by United States military forces, and stories of suffering by innocent Vietnamese.

The low point in the military–media relationship came when military leaders began to blame the media for the United States losing the war.<sup>42</sup> Vice President Spiro Agnew even pleaded with the media to “get on side”<sup>43</sup> with the United States, however, by that time the relationship with the media was already irreconcilably damaged. During World War II, the military enjoyed the patriotic fervor that engrossed the nation and the media, however, as mentioned earlier, the Vietnam War was never established as a clear case of good vs. evil as WWII had been, and most of the American public started to question the purpose the United States’ involvement. The Tet Offensive, in which the North Vietnamese launched a massive attack into major cities in South Vietnam, along with the mounting stories of American atrocities, began to sway public opinion. Additionally, the correspondents reporting on the war were younger<sup>44</sup> and more apt to question policy and strategy than the media in prior wars. Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon supported the claim that reporters who were opposed to the war used their

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<sup>41</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 386.

<sup>42</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America’s Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 40.

<sup>43</sup> “On side” is a term found throughout many readings on the military-media relationship and it means to side with the United States cause, rather than aid the enemy.

<sup>44</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 380.

freedom (from censorship) to publish negative stories about the war effort, which ultimately contributed to the United States' defeat.<sup>45</sup>

When the story of the My Lai Massacre, in which members of C Company, First Battalion, Twentieth Infantry, Eleventh Brigade, Americal Division, entered the village of My Lai and killed between ninety and 130 men, women and children on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1968, broke in late 1969, it also provided a catalyst to the growing American sentiment that the war was no longer just. Prior to My Lai, many editors, although being provided accounts of atrocities in country, would refuse to publish those stories so as to be seen as being on side with the American war effort. After the My Lai story broke, however, media gatekeepers were no longer inhibited about publishing damning, yet accurate, accounts of the war effort.<sup>46</sup>

The media undoubtedly played a major role in the outcome of United States' involvement in Vietnam, but was not the reason the United States came away from Vietnam with an embarrassing defeat. Poor political and military strategy, which is now easily visible in hindsight, were the culprits. Despite the benefit of historical review, many military leaders of the Vietnam era fostered a deep resentment towards the media. Unfortunately, that legacy carried over into the generations who fought the wars after Vietnam.<sup>47</sup>

## **8. War Coverage in the 1980's: Grenada and Panama**

Not wanting to duplicate the mistakes made during the Vietnam War with regards to media coverage, the 1980s brought numerous Department of Defense directives aimed at providing the media access to military forces in wartime. While ensuring access is provided to the news media was historically the role of Public Affairs Officers (PAO), the sight of correspondents in the field in Vietnam was so routine that military officers

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<sup>45</sup> Porch, Douglas. No Bad Stories: The American Media-Military Relationship. *Navy War College Review*, Winter 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY, 1975, p 394.

<sup>47</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN. 1995. p 40.



did not have to incorporate media plans into their operations<sup>48</sup>, guidance from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed Combatant Commanders to incorporate effective public affairs efforts as part of each military operation.<sup>49</sup>

Many of the Generals in the 1980s were products of the Vietnam War who felt that the news media were partly to blame for the United States' loss. General Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has even remarked that in regards to blaming the media for the United States' defeat in Vietnam:

Youngsters are probably doing it, too. I haven't given it much thought, but I would think that they're doing it as a kind of a reflection on what they hear from some of their elders. You know, real men don't talk to the press...<sup>50</sup>

The prevailing sentiment of senior military officers was that the handling of the media was the job of the PAOs.<sup>51</sup> When the Reagan Administration ordered the military to invade Grenada in 1983, these same officers failed to incorporate the JCS directives on media relationships into their battle plans, instead thinking that the status quo in Vietnam still held true in 1983, and the military failed to get the story out to the American public.

The media had changed in many ways since the Vietnam War, both in size and the diversity in means to cover the news. After US forces invaded the island nearly 600 reporters converged onto Barbados to cover the war.<sup>52</sup> However, not having planned for media involvement, either intentionally or unintentionally, reporters were not granted access to the island until the third day of the battle and missed most of the decisive action. General Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, considered the exclusion of the media in this operation from the beginning to be a "huge mistake at the national

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<sup>48</sup> Vietnam, being fought as a war of attrition, consisted of many small skirmishes and firefights. Reporters were flown into the battles with Public Affairs Officers, granted unfettered access to the front lines, and submitted their stories. This was an effective means of news reporting given the limitations of technology and the size of the media at the time.

<sup>49</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN. 1995, p 43.

<sup>50</sup> General John Shalikashvili. From an interview conducted December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1994 by VADM (Ret.) William P. Lawrence and Frank Aukofer

<sup>51</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 43.

<sup>52</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center:

level.”<sup>53</sup> The perceived deception and control of the media at high levels of the military and government, while not readily apparent to the public since Grenada marked the United States’ return to victorious warfare, was made all the more prevalent when Deputy White House Press Secretary, Les Janka resigned and accused the Reagan Administration of being nothing more than:

A PR (public relations) outfit that became President and took over the country. And to the degree then to which the Constitution forced them to do things like make a budget, run foreign policy and all that, they sort of did. But their first, last, and overarching activity was public relations.<sup>54</sup>

Janka’s resignation highlighted the fact that the military had yet to get over the loss in Vietnam and still fostered the feeling that the press was to blame, instead of poor strategy and policy, for the America’s losing war effort.

By not planning for the media’s involvement the military leaders prevented the American public from understanding the purpose, let alone keeping abreast of the progress of the war.<sup>55</sup> Thus, following Grenada, General Vessey appointed a commission to study military-media relations. The panel was composed of active-duty military officers and retired journalists. Retired Major General Winant Sidle, for whom the panel and its report were named, headed it. The establishment of press pools was the key recommendation of the Sidle Report and the most controversial. The media panel members agreed with its basic recommendation:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should support the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary.<sup>56</sup>

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Nashville, TN, 1995, p 44.

<sup>53</sup> Cole, Ronald H. *Operation Urgent Fury: Grenada*. Joint History Office: Washington DC, 1997, p 5.

<sup>54</sup> Hertsgaard, Mark. *On Bended Knee*. Farrar: New York, 1988, p 3.

<sup>55</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America’s Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 39.

<sup>56</sup> Sidle, Winant. *Report of the CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel)*. Department of Defense: Washington DC, 23 August 1984, p 1.

The failed media effort in Grenada led to the establishment of the DoD National Media Pool. While the intention was to make it easier for the media to gain access to the front lines of battle, the corps of officers at the top, still heavily influenced by the Vietnam War, again thought that the press pool would just alleviate their responsibility and tasking of incorporating the media into military operations, as demonstrated during the invasion of Panama in 1989.<sup>57</sup> Attitudes finally began to change about the importance of the media in military operations when General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, disseminated a message to the combatant commanders stating,

Commanders are reminded that the media aspects of military operations are important...and warrant your personal attention. ...Media coverage and pool support requirements must be planned simultaneously with operational plans and should address all aspects of operational activity, including direct combat, medical, prisoner-of-war, refugee, equipment repair, refueling and rearming, civic action, and stabilization activities. Public Affairs annexes should receive command attention when formulating and reviewing all such plans.<sup>58</sup>

## **9. The Gulf War**

The Gulf war, although fought as many previous conventional wars, provided a theater for the use of the stockpile of technical weaponry that had amassed through the latter stages of the Cold War. Just as the war effort was technologically advanced so was the reporting. The battlefield, complete with sound and images, was beamed directly into American homes. While the number of journalists covering wars had been steadily increasing over time, the Gulf War was a benchmark for media coverage:

On the eve of the ground war, over 1,000 aggressive reporters were anxious to get to where the action would be. This compares with 27 reporters who went ashore with Allied troops in the landing in Normandy, or the no more than 70 reporters who were at the front at one time during the Korean War. Only about 400 reporters were accredited during the height of the Vietnam War, of whom only about 10 percent were ever in the field at any given time.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 44.

<sup>58</sup> Message from CJCS to Unified Commands DTG 182305Z MAY 90.

<sup>59</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R.

The Gulf War saw a resurgence of the press pool, which was implemented with limited success, in the 1980s prior to the United States' Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989. Escort officers would take groups of five correspondents out into the field<sup>60</sup>, and grant them limited access to operations. While good in theory, the press pool system showed limitations on wartime reporting. Soldiers in the field were not permitted to talk to reporters without an escort officer present, which was contrastingly different than the relationship reporters shared with soldiers in the field during World War II and to some extent—Vietnam, and the media ended up receiving most of their information content from staged press briefings, highlighting the military's ability to control the information getting back to the American public.<sup>61</sup>



Figure 3. DOONESBURY © cartoon satirizing political correctness spin at press pool briefing.<sup>62</sup>

While correspondents were no longer reliant on the military to provide the means to transmit their stories back home, pre-packaged information from military press briefings and the assignment to press pools with escort officers did seem to paint the military's role in the relationship with the media as manipulative. As mentioned before, soldiers were forbidden from talking to reporters without the presence of an escort officer, and the media often felt that the pool system was a Pentagon apparatus used to

McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 24.

<sup>60</sup> At any one time there might be up to 25 press pools (125 reporters) in the field.

<sup>61</sup> Moskos, Charles C. *The Media and the Military in Peace and Humanitarian Operations*. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation: Chicago, IL, 2000, p 24.

<sup>62</sup> DOONESBURY © G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE.

purposely keep the media away from the action and control media coverage.<sup>63</sup> Figure 3, a Doonesbury cartoon from February 1991, depicts the military's manipulation of the media by preventing them access to the front lines under the veil of operational security. While the images at home were packed with plenty of “gee-whiz” images to satiate the public's desire for news from the front, the media were left with the feeling that they the media coverage of the Gulf War was not as good as it could have been.<sup>64</sup> After the war, the Ad Hoc Media Group submitted a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney that stated:

We believe that the Pentagon Pool arrangements during Operation Desert Storm made it impossible for reporters and photographers to tell the public the full story of the war in a timely fashion. We believe it is imperative that the Gulf war not serve as a model for future coverage.<sup>65</sup>

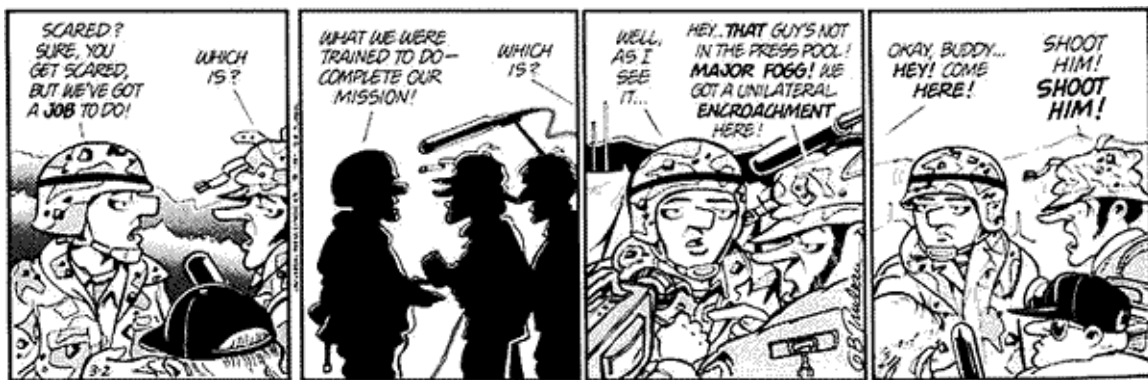


Figure 4. DOONESBURY © cartoon depicting press coverage during 1991 Persian Gulf War.<sup>66</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates the media's growing scrutiny of the military's control over the media that were in country to cover the war. As in past wars, reporters needed to be

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All rights reserved.

<sup>63</sup> Halloran, Richard. *Soldiers and Scribblers: Working with the Media*. *Parameters*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer 1995, pp 151-160.

<sup>64</sup> Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence. *America's Team; The Odd Couple—A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military*. The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Nashville, TN, 1995, p 45.

<sup>65</sup> Letter to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, Ad Hoc Media Group, 25 June 1991.

<sup>66</sup> DOONESBURY © G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved. A 'unilateral' is a news correspondent who ventured into the battle zone without a military escort, outside of the press pool.

credentialed, and in order to have access to the front line soldiers, the reporters were taken to the front in pools. A ‘unilateral’ was a reporter from outside of the press pool who would venture off into the desert without a military escort officer in search of a newsworthy story. While the brunt of the satire is directed towards military public affairs, a certain bit of humor can be found in the suggestion of the competitiveness and infighting amongst the journalists to get original stories back to their editors.

### **C. THE ROLE OF NEWS MEDIA IN TODAY’S MILITARY AND SOCIETY**

The media have, since the beginning of the United States, been a crucial element of American society. They serve many purposes but mainly they keep the public informed of local, regional, national and international happenings, as well as serve as a watchdog for the American public. While some may argue to what extent the media should question the government, especially in time of war, the media do serve a valuable role in American society, helping to ensure the rights and freedoms of Americans are protected by providing information on actions that would threaten these ideals. A recent ABC News survey<sup>67</sup> found that nearly 90% of Americans say that a free press is either ‘very important’ or ‘essential’ to them, going further to say that the media should work mainly to question rather than to support the government. However, during a time of war nearly two thirds of the people polled said that the government has the right to prevent the media from reporting information that may divulge military or operational secrets. Looking back to public perceptions during the last big American war, a 1991 Gallup survey found that four out of five Americans believed that military censorship was a “good idea.”<sup>68</sup>

Just as the Gulf War illustrated new methods of bringing the front lines of battle to the American (and international) public, technology is making the public thirstier than ever for up-to-the-minute news coverage. The rise of 24 hour a day cable news stations<sup>69</sup> and news outlets based on Internet technology have connected the public to all corners of

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<sup>67</sup> This survey was conducted on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and can be found in its entirety in Appendix C.

<sup>68</sup> Fialka, John. *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*. Woodrow Wilson Press: Washington DC, 1992, pp 61-62.

<sup>69</sup> Fox News, MSNBC, CNN, etc.

the globe, and created a need to feed information to the public. As illustrated as far back as the Civil War and Spanish-American War<sup>70</sup>, wars sell newspapers, and in today's case, garner television viewers and hits on Internet websites.

The ABC News Survey poses a very good question— To what extent should the media have access to and report on military operations? “In recent years, the tendency to formulate U.S. foreign policy with little or no formal debate between the administration and the Congress has left a vacuum that the media has rushed to fill.”<sup>71</sup> The need for operational secrecy as well as the requirement to keep the public informed is a delicate balance that, when mishandled, can send the military-media relationship into a disastrous tailspin much like the aftermath of the Vietnam War. However, in the United States the press serves as the first guarantor of our most basic civil rights, and thus has the responsibility to question the matching of policy to strategy, which is in direct contrast to the sentiments expressed in the ABC News survey. Supporting the ABC survey findings, a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, found that only 49% of the people polled thought that the media were patriotic, with 35% going further to state that the media were too critical of the country.<sup>72</sup>

More recently, in preparation for impending conflict with Iraq, the press pools of the 1990s have been abandoned in favor of the embedded reporter, similar to the days of Vietnam, “when reporters traveled with front-line troops. The Pentagon is expected to allow about 500 reporters to “embed” with various fighting units—living with and reporting on them from deployment right into battle and back home again.”<sup>73</sup> Self imposed guidelines, such as those used in Korea and Vietnam, are being used in conjunction with new rules—which are a result of the improvements in telecommunications and enemy capabilities to geo-locate electronic emissions.

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<sup>70</sup> When William Randolph Hearst instructed his reporter to stay in Cuba because if he would furnish the pictures, Hearst would furnish the War. Quoted in Knightley's *The First Casualty*, p 56.

<sup>71</sup> Porch, Douglas. No Bad Stories: The American Media-Military Relationship. *Navy War College Review*, Winter 2002.

<sup>72</sup> News Media's Improved Image Proves Short-Lived: The Sagging Stock Market's Big Audience. *The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press*. August 4, 2002. <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=159> (March 2003)

<sup>73</sup> Johnson, Peter. Reporters Have Own Rules of War, *USA Today*, February 16, 2003. <http://www.usatoday.com/life/2003-02-17-war-sidebar.htm> (March 2003)

Embedding reporters with military units will allow mutual trust to foster between soldiers and reporters and allow the American public to experience the sacrifices made by their soldiers, airmen, and sailors.

To what extent should the media have access to and report on military operations? History and experience help draw the conclusion that the media are essential to military operations so as to add validity and justness to the military operation in and of itself. Without the media present on the battlefield, the only story that would reach the American public is that of the governments. While the American government undoubtedly prides itself on being the beacon of democracy and number one provider and enforcing authority of civil rights, without the checks and balance provided by the media, rampant mistrust by the American public would be sure to plague reports that are solely provided by the military. Hence, the media are a necessity during wartime, as well as all other times, and must be incorporated into military operations.



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### **III. MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP DEBACLES**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Navy, as well as the other services, must embrace the fact that negative press is inevitable. The challenge is to not allow negative attitudes toward the Navy to become the norm. Being prepared to counter negative press can go a long way towards alleviating any long-term side affects from tarnishing the military's image.

The difficulty encountered by the military when dealing with this target set, peoples' attitudes, is that these organizations are accustomed to engaging tangible objects and not the intangible aspects of the human mind. While tangible targets such as tanks and radar facilities can easily be targeted and destroyed, the attitudes of people are not objects that can be destroyed. Attitudes are developed from information and that information can be fact or fiction. The American ideal of a free press and prevalence of the media help guarantee that the facts will be discovered despite the presence of fictional information. The previous chapter examined the relationship between the American military and the media during times of war. For the most part, with Vietnam being the obvious exception, the military has had a good working relationship with the media during wartime. There have definitely been some instances in which media access to the military was less than ideal, with Grenada and Panama being recent examples, however, the story presented was, for the most part, favorable to the military.

Looking at the ABC News poll<sup>74</sup>, in wartime, 56% of the people polled stated that the media should support the war effort, with only 36% feeling that the media should question the war effort. In general (during times other than war), the poll states that 58% of the people polled felt that the media should question the government, with only 25% stating that the media should support the government no matter what.<sup>75</sup> These polls are consistent with the historical trends presented in earlier chapters and provide reason for the perceived bias in the military towards the media. While military coverage during

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<sup>74</sup> This survey was conducted on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and can be found in its entirety in Appendix C.

<sup>75</sup> 13% reported that it depended on the subject.

wars most often casts favorable light upon the military, the stories that grace the headlines during peacetime are often much to the military's chagrin.

Two recent examples within the Navy highlight the importance of a positive military-media relationship, as well as point to ways to make the media a more viable asset to the Navy and other U.S. services. The 1989 explosion onboard USS IOWA (BB-61), in which 47 sailors lost their lives, showed how being unprepared for dealing with the media can prove detrimental to a service's goals. A drawn out and biased investigation, coupled with efforts to keep the media away from the investigation embroiled top Navy officers and irretrievably marred the Navy's image. More recently, the 2001 collision between the Navy submarine USS GREENEVILLE (SSN 772) and the Japanese fishing trawler, *Ehime Maru*, again illustrated the Navy's unwillingness to embrace the media as its conduit to the public. The cost of these failures was the loss of confidence of the American public in the Navy's leadership.

## **B. 1989 USS IOWA EXPLOSION**

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989, Turret Two, one of the IOWA's sixteen-inch gun turrets, unexpectedly exploded during a routine gunnery exercise. The ensuing investigation carried on for years. After initially casting blame on one of the crewmembers that died in the explosion, the Navy eventually accepted the general theory that the explosion destroyed much of the evidence and the truth would never be discovered.

### **1. Bringing the Battleships Back**

As part of Navy Secretary John Lehman's plan for a six hundred-ship navy, the four IOWA class battleships were to be re-commissioned and introduced back into the Navy's fleet.<sup>76</sup> While many in Congress doubted Lehman's plan, he assured them that the battleships could be brought back into the inventory without much difficulty. Despite their exceptional cost to operate, the battleships offered long range Naval Surface Fire Support as well as the new capability of deep strike as a result of the addition to Tomahawk missile armored box launchers to her array of armaments.

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<sup>76</sup> Thompson, Charles C. II. *A Glimpse of Hell: The Explosion on the USS IOWA and Its Cover-Up*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc: New York, NY. 1999. p 138.

## **2. The Explosion**

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989, IOWA was operating off of Puerto Rico, when while conducting a gunnery exercise, Turret Two suffered a catastrophic explosion, which claimed the lives of 47 sailors. While this paper does not attempt to assert the exact cause of the IOWA explosion, but only to highlight the areas in which the media could have been used more effectively, the following explanation of the explosion, given by Richard L. Schwoebel, who led the Sandia National Laboratory experiments in determining the cause of the IOWA disaster, allows for the possibility of any of the number of factors that could have caused the explosion.

It is not possible for anyone outside of the turret to know precisely what is happening in the center gun room of Turret Two. While it was later determined that loading of the projectile was normal, something occurred in the loading of the powder bags that caused a delay. Perhaps the inexperienced upper powder hoist operator mislocated the powder car and a readjustment was required. Perhaps the new rammerman was confused by the counterintuitive nature of the powder door handle and this slowed the loading process. Perhaps there was a discussion about the use of improper propellant with the 2,700 pound projectile. Perhaps, as the Navy came to believe, the gun captain inserted an ignition device instead of the lead foils into the propellant train and directed an overram to initiate an explosion.<sup>77</sup>

## **3. Covering Up**

The Navy sought, at first, to pin the blame on Navy Petty Officer Second Class Clayton Hartwig. Stating that he was a disgruntled homosexual, the Navy asserted that he caused the explosion that killed him and 46 of his shipmates.<sup>78</sup> What was not immediately brought to light about the incident was the material condition of Turret Two prior to the gunnery exercise, nor were the flaws in the investigation following the investigation considered by the Navy in determining blame.

The accident scene was immediately cleaned and repainted, so that as the ship returned to Norfolk the public would not be horrified by the sight of the explosion. Body parts were removed from the turret, thereby not allowing an accurate reconstruction of

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<sup>77</sup> Schwoebel, Richard L. *Explosion Aboard the Iowa*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD. 1999. p 6.

<sup>78</sup> Schwoebel, Richard L. *Explosion Aboard the Iowa*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD. 1999. p 42.

the accident scene.<sup>79</sup> All that was left was a shroud of mystery that the Navy hastily pinned to the results of one man—Clayton Hartwig.

When the Navy released its technical report on the cause of the explosion on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1989, the survivors, Congress, and the family of Clayton Hartwig were dissatisfied with the report. Subsequent hearings were conducted in the House and Senate, with the general feeling being that the Navy had rushed to judgment in determining that the sole blame for the explosion rested with Hartwig. Senator William Cohen (R-Maine) spoke before the Senate Armed Forces Committee Hearing that

A possibility was wrapped up by investigators and psychological architects into probabilities that were then paraded around as certitudes. Faulty equipment was ruled out, and that left only human error. Human error took on the dimensions of a disturbed and unbalanced young man who murdered forty-six of his shipmates.<sup>80</sup>

The Navy did not immediately assign the blame to Hartwig. They explored possible accidental causes that might have been the catalyst for the explosion. However, since they were unable to replicate any accidental causes that could trigger the explosion, they concluded that there were no accidental causes.

As mentioned previously, the cause of the accident is not the aim of this chapter, missteps with the media is. The main error committed by the Navy was their rush to judgment. Sandia National Laboratory was unable to determine, for absolute certainty, that Clayton Hartwig did or did not insert an ignition device into the powder train on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989.<sup>81</sup> Subsequently, Congress, the public, and the media, later heavily criticized the hasty accusation of Hartwig as the lone conspirator in the explosion.

#### **4. Doing It Differently**

The final casualty in this incident was the public's confidence in the Navy leadership to manage the situation. The Navy should have fed the media reports of the

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<sup>79</sup> Thompson, Charles C. II. *A Glimpse of Hell: The Explosion on the USS IOWA and Its Cover-Up*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc: New York, NY. 1999. p 133.

<sup>80</sup> Schwoebel, Richard L. *Explosion Aboard the Iowa*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD. 1999. p 155.

<sup>81</sup> Schwoebel, Richard L. *Explosion Aboard the Iowa*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD. 1999. p 159.

incident and ensuing investigation. While the labeling of Hartwig as the cause of the accident was a result of political infighting between the Navy and Congress, and was the ultimate cause of the military-media debacle, much more could have been done to placate America's desire to know the cause of the incident.

### **C. 2001 USS GREENEVILLE-EHIME MARU COLLISION**

As part of an effort to win the hearts and minds of the American public, the Navy often allows distinguished members of the public to venture out on Navy vessels as part of a program called 'Leaders to Sea'. This program allows prominent members of communities across America to see the Navy firsthand, with hopes that they convey their good experiences back to their neighbors. While the one-day excursions rarely take the civilians too far away from shore, they are given a brief taste of Navy life as well as the opportunity to experience military technology that much of the public only reads about in newspapers or news stories on television.

#### **1. The Collision**

The GREENEVILLE's mission on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001, was just that—take a group of 14 Texans, who were in Hawaii to participate in a golf tournament to support the restoration of the battleship Missouri, out on a day long cruise and “impress them.”<sup>82</sup> After a series of maneuvers, called “angles and dangles”, meant to test the evasive capabilities of the ship, the captain of the submarine, CDR Scott Waddle, brought the submarine to periscope depth, conducted a brief scan of the ocean's surface and conferred with his fire control technicians to verify that there were no ships or boats in the area, and after coming to the conclusion that the surface was clear, he ordered an emergency deep maneuver, taking the GREENEVILLE and her guests on a harrowing ride down to 400 feet below the ocean surface. To top off the VIPs day and to send them home with a lasting impression of the Navy, CDR Waddle ordered an emergency blow of the ships main ballast tanks, sending the GREENEVILLE shooting to the surface in just a few seconds. However, a Japanese fishing trawler, the *Ehime Maru*, carrying with it a group of high school students, had came out of the haze around Oahu and into the area in which

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<sup>82</sup> Waddle, Scott and Ken Abraham. The Right Thing. Integrity Publishers. Nashville, TN. 2003, p 119.

the GREENEVILLE was operating. As the GREENEVILLE reached the surface, the submarine sliced through the hull of the *Ehime Maru*, sending most of its crew into the Ocean, and nine Japanese to the ocean bottom.<sup>83</sup>

## **2. The Aftermath**

The ensuing investigation and political wrangling with Japan seemed to overlook one thing—the attitudes of the public. The Navy was quick to act in determining fault for the collision; however, given that Japan is a valuable strategic asset, efforts to placate the Japanese for their loss were less than stellar.

Envoys were sent to Japan to offer an apology on behalf of the United States and monetary compensation was given to the families of the *Ehime Maru* victims, but the Navy failed to control the situation. Although the United States understands the cultural norm in Japan of offering apology, the liability-conscience nature of the American society prevented top officials from allowing CDR Waddle to offer his apologies and regrets to the Japanese in a timely manner. This proved to be the wrong tactic.

As noted earlier, attitudes are based on available information. In the absence of information from the Navy, public attitudes were shaped by sources with little or no factual information about the incident. The Navy's reluctance to take a broader role in the press coverage of the collision removed important information from the public forum and prevented attitudes from being formed with information from both sides of the incident. Media reports were reluctant to term the collision accidental, instead insinuating that the GREENEVILLE had recklessly rammed into the *Ehime Maru*. Had the Navy actively kept the media informed of the details surrounding the collision, the media might not have painted such a damning portrait of the situation, and relations between the two countries would not have been strained to such a degree. Not only were international relationships strained, once again the American public was given reason to doubt the ability of Navy leaders to handle an unfortunate situation.

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<sup>83</sup> Waddle, Scott and Ken Abraham. The Right Thing. Integrity Publishers. Nashville, TN. 2003, p 119.

These events were highlighted to show the significance of not dealing-in-good-faith with the press. As the premier conduit of information from the military to the public, an unwillingness to deal with press can be interpreted as an unwillingness to deal with the American public. The Navy, in its role as a defender of that public, must maintain the confidence of the public to conduct its mission. As shown through the IOWA and GREENEVILLE incidents an inability or unwillingness to deal effectively with the press can have detrimental affects on the public's confidence in its Navy leaders.



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## **IV. SURVEY AND EXPERIMENT**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

A survey commissioned by the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation and conducted by the Gallup Organization in 1999 as part of the Catigny Conference Series polled the American public, one-and two-star officers in the United States military, and representatives of the media. The study showed that considerable bias existed between the media and the military and pointed to specific reasons for that bias—with the major reasons for bias being that military officers editors and other media “gatekeepers” are more interested in selling the news than accurate reporting and that the media, through negligence and lack of ethos in their reporting, are a threat to national security and military operations—both feelings that are indicative of the low point in the relationship between the media and the military that culminated with the Vietnam War. Since a symbiotic relationship would be mutually beneficial to the media and the military, the proposed survey as part of this thesis is engineered to extend the military polling to the more junior ranks of officers. Doing so might show a clear, distinct point in an officer's career in which biases are developed for or against the media.

### **B. THE SURVEY**

In order to make the data collected by the 1999 survey conducted by the Gallup Organization relevant to data collected by the proposed survey, the survey detailed in [Appendix B](#), has been engineered using the questions that were administered to the survey respondents in 1999, as well as some demographic identifying questions. The demographic data will serve to allow the researcher to identify cases of bias based on age, rank, gender, educational background, upbringing, commissioning source, and political views. The ultimate goal of this survey is to attempt to pinpoint root causes for military-media biases and, if they exist, propose methods to mitigate those biases so that a better relationship can be fostered between these two entities.

### **C. IMPLEMENTING THE SURVEY**

The Survey will be conducted online, hosted on an NPS server, and directed towards Unrestricted Line officers (URL) in the United States Navy. In order to comply with NAVPGSCOLINST 3900.4, Protection of Human Subjects, a request, outlined in [Appendix A](#), must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), along with a copy of the intended survey questions listed in [Appendix B](#). Once approved, the survey, entered into an online survey software processing package, will then be hosted on an NPS server and invitations sent out to officers in the target group to participate in the survey.

### **D. EXPERIMENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Data will be collected on the NPS server and downloaded to workable formats, either in a database or spreadsheet format. The data can then be analyzed, computing averages for responses to questions in which a numerical value had been given and observing recurring trends.

After basic computation of the data, the data can be imported into [ARC software](#)<sup>84</sup> for further analysis. These experiments should take the responses in which a spectrum of answers produced no clear answer on whether or not a bias exists, and decide whether or not a split occurs between different values of the demographic data. For example, if a survey question yields the following results: 53% of respondents stated that the reason that they are biased against the media is because they have been wronged by the media in the past, while 47% of respondents answer the opposite, the data could then be examined against the rank demographic and identify when in an officers career media training should be implemented.

The following are suggested comparisons to make between the data sets collected. Not all of the questions are represented, but should a data set correlating to a specific question stand out, appropriate comparisons to demographic data should be examined.

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<sup>84</sup> Applied Regression Including Computing and Graphics. University of Minnesota. <http://www.stat.umn.edu/arc/> (February 2003)

- Questions 8 and 9 (political views) vs. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13 (demographic data)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 17 (how well military fulfills its role to keep media and public informed)
- Questions 1,2,4 and 5 (demographics) vs. Questions 18, 19, and 20 (want, need, and right to know about military issues and operations)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 23 (factors affecting officers' willingness to share information with the media)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 25 (media access to military)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 26 (PAOs role in media-military relationship)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 29 (risks associated with talking with media)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 31 (consequences associated with talking with media)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 32 (factors affecting media's ability to inform public)
- Questions 1,2,4, and 5 (demographics) vs. Question 37 (considerations for editors and media gatekeepers in publishing news stories)

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## APPENDIX A—INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PACKAGE

### NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ROUTE SHEET

Ref:

Date: March 24, 2003

IRB Committee Member,

You have been selected as an expedited reviewer for the enclosed protocol. If the protocol meets IRB requirements and is not greater than minimal risk, please sign the enclosed approval memorandum for the experimental protocol you have reviewed and return to the Chair when completed. Please review this as soon as possible. We'd like to have protocols reviewed within one week of processing. If this protocol exceeds minimal risk, disapprove and please notify the IRB Chair immediately.

Thank you.

REVIEWER NAME/TITLE/CONTACT INFO	INITIAL HERE



NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**  
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

TO: LCDR Steven J. Iatrou

FROM: LCDR Russell Shilling, Acting Chair, NPS Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

DATE: March 24, 2003

SUBJ: APPROVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL PROTOCOL

1. Your protocol entitled "Military-Media Bias Online Survey" has been approved by the NPS Institutional Review Board.
2. You may begin your experiment under the guidelines outlined in your protocol.
3. This approval will remain active for one year from the above date. However, if there are any changes made to your approved protocol over the duration of your data collection, it will be necessary to reapply to the NPS IRB for approval.
4. At the conclusion of data collection, you agree to present a project summary to the NPS IRB which will remain on permanent record.

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Reviewer's Name and Title

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LCDR R. Shilling  
IRB Chair

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NPS Approving Official



NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL

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Tel: 831-656-4660  
DSN: 878-4660  
sjiatrou@nps.navy.mil

To: Protection of Human Subjects Committee

Subject: **Application for Human Subjects Review for Media-Military Relationship Online Survey**

1. Attached is a list of questions to be administered in an online survey during the month of February 2003.
2. We are requesting approval of the described experimental protocol.
3. We include the consent forms and privacy act statements that will be part of the navigation process to the URL at which the survey is being hosted.
4. Once a participant completes the survey, no debrief will be given. Final results will be tabulated and analyzed and incorporated into a thesis project exploring the inherent bias towards the media in the military.

S. J. Iatrou  
LCDR USN



APPLICATION FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW (HSR)		HSR NUMBER <i>(to be assigned)</i>
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S) <i>(Full Name, Code, Telephone)</i> LCDR Steven J. Iatrou, Code 37/39, 1-831-656-3770		
APPROVAL REQUESTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal		
LEVEL OF RISK <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More than Minimal Justification: Study only involves completion of online-survey.		
WORK WILL BE DONE IN (Site/Bldg/Rm) NPS, Root Hall, 201I	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DAYS TO COMPLETE 28 Days	
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SUBJECTS 3000	ESTIMATED LENGTH OF EACH SUBJECT'S PARTICIPATION 30 Minutes	
SPECIAL POPULATIONS THAT WILL BE USED AS SUBJECTS <input type="checkbox"/> Subordinates <input type="checkbox"/> Minors <input type="checkbox"/> NPS Students <input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs (e.g. Pregnant women) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted Line Officers Specify safeguards to avoid undue influence and protect subject's rights:  SurveySaid software is anonymous. Only demographic data will be used to annotate data.		
OUTSIDE COOPERATING INVESTIGATORS AND AGENCIES N/A  <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the cooperating institution's HSR decision is attached.		
TITLE OF EXPERIMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH (attach additional sheet if needed). <i>Military-Media Relationship Online Survey. Survey will attempt to identify a bias towards media by military officers and discern if there is a specific time in an officer's career when he/she becomes biased against the media.</i>		
I have read and understand NPS Notice on the Protection of Human Subjects. If there are any changes in any of the above information or any changes to the attached Protocol, Consent Form, or Debriefing Statement, I will suspend the experiment until I obtain new Committee approval.  SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____		

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in an online survey studying the military and the media. We ask you to read the following paragraphs and press the “Participate in Survey” button below indicating that you agree to be in the study. Please direct any questions you may have to [LCDR Steven J. Iatrou, sjiatrou@nps.navy.mil](mailto:sjiatrou@nps.navy.mil).

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions that are aimed at assessing the relationship between the military and the media amongst the Navy’s unrestricted line Officer Corps. The first 13 questions are for collecting demographic information and will aid in the identification of statistical trends, while the remaining questions address the military-media relationship.

**Privacy Act Statement.** Data collected from this survey will be used for statistical analysis by the Principal Investigator, Departments of the Navy and Defense, and other U.S. Government agencies, provided this use is compatible with the purpose for which the information was collected. Use of the information may be granted to legitimate non-government agencies or individuals by the Naval Postgraduate School in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

1. **Risks.** This research involves virtually no risk at all.
2. **Compensation.** No tangible reward will be given. Results will be available in a completed thesis project titled, “*Military-Media Relationships: Identifying and Mitigating Military-Media Biases to Improve Future Military Operations.*”
3. **Confidentiality.** No information will be gathered which could identify you as a participant.
4. **Voluntary Nature of the Study.** If you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
5. **Minimal Risk Consent Statement.** I understand that this project does not involve more than minimal risk.
6. **Voluntary Participation.** I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I also understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
7. **Statement of Consent.** I have read the above information. I agree to participate in this study. I understand that this project does not involve more than minimal risk. I have been informed of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to me.

Participate in Survey

Decline Participation

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## **APPENDIX B—MILITARY MEDIA RELATIONSHIP SURVEY QUESTIONS**

**Questions 1-13 are designed to provide demographic identifiers to the survey data and enable collected data to be correlated to specific age, rank, commissioning source, career field, or gender.**

**1. What is your rank?**

- ☐ ENS
- ☐ LTJG
- ☐ LT
- ☐ LCDR
- ☐ CDR
- ☐ CAPT
- ☐ RDML
- ☐ RADM
- ☐ VADM
- ☐ ADM

**2. What is your primary specialty?**

- ☐ Aviator
- ☐ Submariner
- ☐ Surface Warfare Officer

**3. In what year were you born (YYYY format)?**

**4. In what year were you commissioned (YYYY format)?**

**5. What is your commissioning source?**

- ☐ OCS
- ☐ ROTC
- ☐ USNA
- ☐ Enlisted Commissioning Program
- ☐ Seaman to Admiral
- ☐ Other

**6. What is your sex?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**7. What is the highest level of education that you have received?**

- ☐ high school
- ☐ some college
- ☐ college graduate
- ☐ some graduate work

- o graduate degree

**8. How would you describe your views on political matters?**

- o far left
- o very liberal
- o somewhat liberal
- o moderate
- o somewhat conservative
- o very conservative
- o far right
- o other
- o no opinion

**9. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and Independent, or what?**

- o Republican
- o Democrat
- o Independent
- o no preference
- o other

**10. What is the highest level of education that you father obtained?**

- o less than high school
- o high school
- o some college
- o college graduate
- o some graduate work
- o graduate degree

**11. What is the highest level of education that your mother obtained?**

- o less than high school
- o high school
- o some college
- o college graduate
- o some graduate work
- o graduate degree

**12. Where did you live most of the time when you were growing up?**

- o New England
- o South
- o Mountain States
- o Pacific Coast
- o Mid-Atlantic
- o Midwest
- o Southwest
- o moved around

- o other (please specify)

**13. What is your racial/ethnic identity?**

- o White or Caucasian, not Hispanic
- o Hispanic
- o Asian-American
- o Black or African-American, not Hispanic
- o American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut
- o other (please specify)

**Questions 14-39 are designed to identify an officer's feelings towards the role of the military in the post—Cold War world and to identify bias towards the media.**

**14. Which of the following do you feel are appropriate roles for the United States military to play in contemporary American society. Choose among 4, “very appropriate,” 3, “somewhat appropriate,” 2, “somewhat inappropriate,” and 1, “very inappropriate.”**

- o Informing the public about military/national security issues
- o Education, training, career opportunities for youth
- o Domestic disaster relief
- o Model for resolution of social problems
- o Enforcement of immigration policies
- o Domestic law enforcement

**15. Which of the following do you feel are appropriate roles for the United States military to play in the post-Cold War world. Choose among 4, “very appropriate,” 3, “somewhat appropriate,” 2, “somewhat inappropriate,” and 1, “very inappropriate.”**

- o Protect the U.S. from foreign aggressors
- o Provide military advice to U.S. political leaders
- o Assist in the defense of allies
- o Assist emerging democracies with professionalization and de-politicization of their militaries
- o Protect U.S. economic interests abroad
- o Participate in multinational peacekeeping efforts
- o Support humanitarian relief efforts
- o Intervene in civil wars when it is deemed in the U.S. national interest
- o Support and participate in foreign counter-narcotics activities

**16. How well do you think the media keep the public informed about military and national security issues?**

- o Very well
- o Somewhat well
- o Not very well
- o Not well at all
- o Don't know

**17. How well do you think the military fulfills its responsibility to keep the public informed about military and national security issues?**

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not very well
- ☐ Not well at all
- ☐ Don't know

**18. Do you *want* to know about the following issues?**

- ☐ Terrorist threats
- ☐ Counter-terrorist activities
- ☐ Military readiness
- ☐ Effect on reaching policy goals
- ☐ Physical damage
- ☐ Human casualties
- ☐ Quality of life
- ☐ Sexual misconduct

**19. Do you feel that you *need* to know about the following issues?**

- ☐ Terrorist threats
- ☐ Counter-terrorist activities
- ☐ Military readiness
- ☐ Effect on reaching policy goals
- ☐ Physical damage
- ☐ Human casualties
- ☐ Quality of life
- ☐ Sexual misconduct

**20. Do you feel that you *have a right* to know about the following issues?**

- ☐ Terrorist threats
- ☐ Counter-terrorist activities
- ☐ Military readiness
- ☐ Effect on reaching policy goals
- ☐ Physical damage
- ☐ Human casualties
- ☐ Quality of life
- ☐ Sexual misconduct

**21. How important do you feel it is for members of the public to receive accurate and timely information on military and national security issues and events?**

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not important at all
- ☐ Don't know

**22. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being representing the highest importance rating, rate the importance of the following issues affecting the public's awareness of the military.**

- o No current military threats to the United States
- o Regional conflicts are far away and too difficult to understand
- o There are more important personal issues to worry about (economy, education, school violence)
- o Declining share of Americans have served in the military (lack of personal experience)
- o Elimination of the draft
- o Technowar: Battles are being fought with technology, with very few if any U.S. casualties
- o Too much on the American plate (lack of time to give the military serious consideration)
- o Our current set of role models and heroes are not from the military (all sports and entertainment)
- o Because it's about where they want to be (medium level of interest, therefore medium level of awareness)
- o Perceived change in mission of the military from U.S. defense to global peacekeeper
- o U.S. is entertainment oriented society; military events are not entertainment
- o The post-Cold-War message (we won!)
- o Changes in the media (cutbacks in funding, number of reporters, etc.)
- o Lack of serious intellectual debate or challenge coming from the media (not as much investigative reporting, detail)
- o Sense that the public feels powerless/disconnected in general (high level of apathy)
- o Impact of negative news stories about the military (sexual misconduct and scandals)

**23. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being representing the highest importance rating, rate the importance of the following issues that (would) affect your willingness to share information with the media.**

- o Concern about impact on current military operations
- o Lack of general trust in the media by members of the military
- o Fear that comments will be taken out of context and misinterpreted
- o Impact on personal careers (advancement or otherwise)
- o The "good news" offered won't be published
- o A sense that the story has already been written—media are just looking for a footnote or a source
- o A sense that the media don't truly respect or understand the military's complexity and culture
- o Lead by example (senior officers not going forward on key issues; therefore, junior officers continue with this style)
- o Informal mentoring: People who have been burned in the past pass this lesson on to new members of the military
- o Personal experience of being burned (I've been burned once, I won't get burned again)



- o Civilian leadership not being visible or encouraging to media access
- o Potential for negative impact on congressional funding efforts
- o Not comfortable with the skill levels to deliver the information and respond to the kinds of questions asked
- o Impact on future programs if information in the media precedes procurement
- o No personal benefit or value
- o A level of arrogance that the military “owns” the data

**24. In general, how would you access the Navy’s relation ship with the media. Choose among 4, “excellent,” 3, “good,” 2, “fair,” and 1, “poor.”**

**25. Should the media have maximum access to the military:**

- o In peacetime?
- o During military conflict?
- o When military action is being planned?

**26. Public affairs *encourages* military officers to speak with reporters:**

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

**27. Public affairs tends to restrict media access to information:**

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

**28. Public affairs tends to follow the orders and desires of senior civilian and military leadership in deciding how to approach setting levels of access:**

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

**29. How would you rate the relative risk of speaking with the media in regards to the following issues. Choose among 4, “a very serious risk,” 3, “a fairly serious risk,” 2, “not a very serious risk,” and 1, “not a risk at all.”**

- o Battle plans or operations
- o Intelligence issues
- o Criticism of current defense or security policies
- o Issues which could embarrass a senior officer
- o Facts contradicting official statement or policies
- o Issues which are the responsibility of superiors

- o Scandal in the officer's office or base
- o Sensitive social issues
- o Public policy relating to the military
- o Capabilities of declassified weapons and technology
- o Personnel issues
- o Quality of life issues
- o Basic and advanced training techniques

**30. In speaking with the media, how constrained do you/officers feel due to the influence of: (Choose among 4, "a great deal," 3, "a fair amount," 2, "not very much," and 1, "not at all.")**

- o Civilian leaders
- o Superior officers
- o Public affairs officers
- o Peers

**31. Rate the following consequences that concern you most when speaking with reporters: (Choose among 4, "a very serious concern," 3, "a fairly serious concern," 2, "not a very serious concern," and 1, "not a concern at all.")**

- o Harming national security
- o Embarrassing your service
- o Putting your career at risk
- o Hurting your chances for promotion
- o Hurting your standing with colleagues

**32. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being representing the highest importance rating, rate the importance of the following factors that you view are affecting the media's ability to inform the public.**

- o The current news premium is on sound bites—sensationalism vs. depth
- o The ability to raise the priority of military stories with editors
- o Complexity of military information doesn't fit the new journalism template/format
- o The level of budget and resource cuts experienced by the media in coverage resources for military news and events
- o Lack of general access to military personnel
- o Lack of patience by media to give military time to prepare and analyze
- o Low level of public interest/apathy
- o Too much focus on issues and officers in the Beltway; not enough human-interest stories of personal relevance
- o Challenging for the media to assess public interest in a specific regional conflict
- o Concern that the military is trying to spin or control the story (therefore, no news might be preferable)
- o Lack of personal military experience by reporters or writers
- o Lack of consistent skills by the military to deliver the information
- o Public's concern about media accountability in general
- o Military news doesn't sell newspapers

**33. Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, how do you think the end of the Cold War has influenced:**

**The assignment of reporters to cover military and security issues?**

- ☐ More reporters assigned
- ☐ Same number assigned
- ☐ Fewer assigned

**The level of experience reporters have when covering military and security issues?**

- ☐ More experienced
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Less experienced

**34. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, how do you think the United States' War on Terror has influenced:**

**The assignment of reporters to cover military and security issues?**

- ☐ More reporters assigned
- ☐ Same number assigned
- ☐ Fewer assigned

**The level of experience reporters have when covering military and security issues?**

- ☐ More experienced
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Less experienced

**35. When a reporter wants to do a story on the military or a national security issue, it must be approved by an editor or other gatekeeper. What effect do you think editors and gatekeepers have on how fairly and accurately stories get reported?**

- ☐ More fair/accurate
- ☐ Just as fair/accurate
- ☐ Less fair/accurate

**36. Do editors and gatekeepers or individual reporters have a greater role in determining which military and national security issues get reported in the media?**

- ☐ Editors and gatekeepers
- ☐ Reporters

**37. How important are the following considerations to editors and gatekeepers?**

**Informing the public:**

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not important at all

**Selling more copies or getting better ratings:**

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Not very important

- o Not important at all

**38. How has the rise of the 24-hour news television channels and increased competition influenced the quality of news reporting of military and security issues?**

- o Greatly improved
- o Modestly improved
- o Modestly worsened
- o Greatly worsened

**39. How does the Internet affect the quality of reporting on military and national security issues?**

- o Improves
- o Stays the same
- o Worsens

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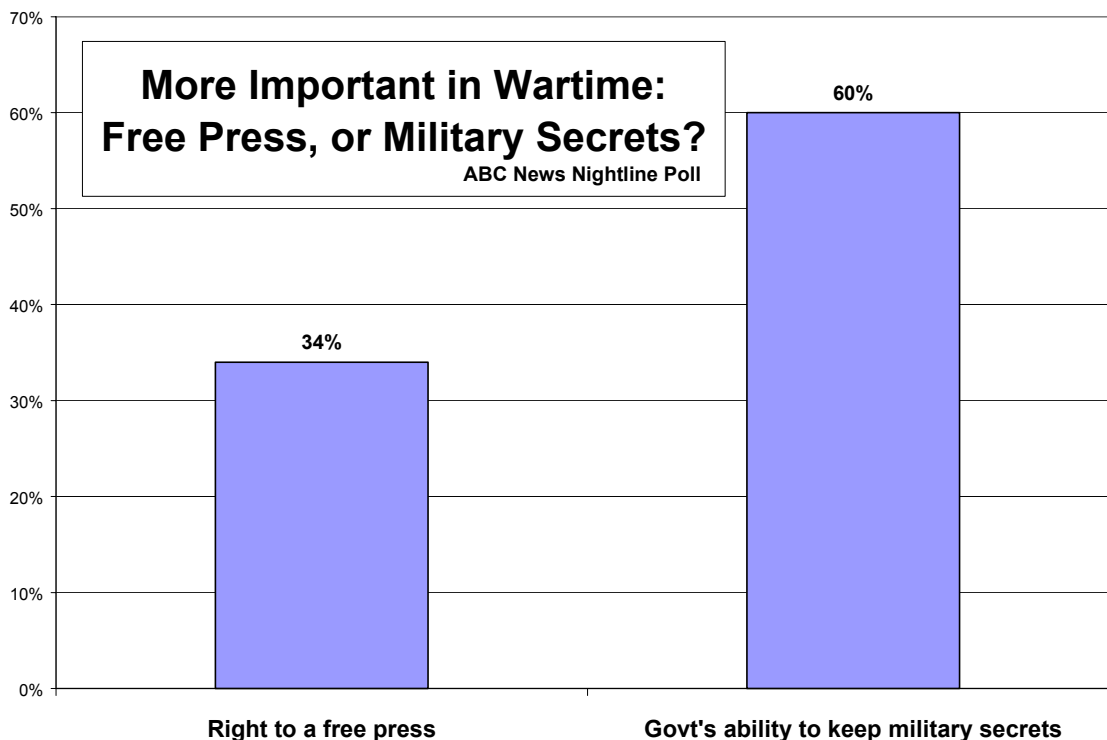
## APPENDIX C—ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE POLL: THE MEDIA IN WARTIME

ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE POLL: THE MEDIA IN WARTIME – 1/12/03  
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, 2003

### Public Views of Press Freedom: Wartime Changes the Equation

Most Americans support the principle of an unfettered and probing press – but not necessarily in wartime.

In general, support for press freedom is broad: Nearly nine in 10 Americans in this ABC News Nightline poll say a free press is "very important" or "essential" to them. Most say the media should work mainly to question rather than to support government activities. And fewer than three in 10 say the government should have power to control what the media report.



But wartime raises different concerns. The public by a wide margin says that in times of war the need for military secrecy is more important than press freedom. Two-thirds say the government should have the power to prohibit the reporting of sensitive military

information. And most favor a different, less adversarial approach to war coverage by the news media themselves.

Such views underscore how many Americans reject an unyielding concept of rights – either you have them or you don’t – in favor of a more flexible view of competing interests, with priorities dependent on current concerns, and especially, crises. In this case, most say that where a free press butts up against the government’s need to keep military secrets in wartime, the war effort prevails.

This poll was done in support of an ABC News Nightline special, "Viewpoint: Patriotism, Journalism and War" airing Friday, Jan. 17 at 11:35 p.m. Eastern time.

Measured independently, it finds, press freedoms and the importance of government secrecy in wartime both are seen by large majorities as very important or essential concerns. But somewhat more call military secrecy in wartime "essential" – 49 percent, compared to 38 percent who call press freedoms essential. And when the two are matched head on, Americans by 60-34 percent say the government's ability to keep wartime secrets is more important than the right to a free press.

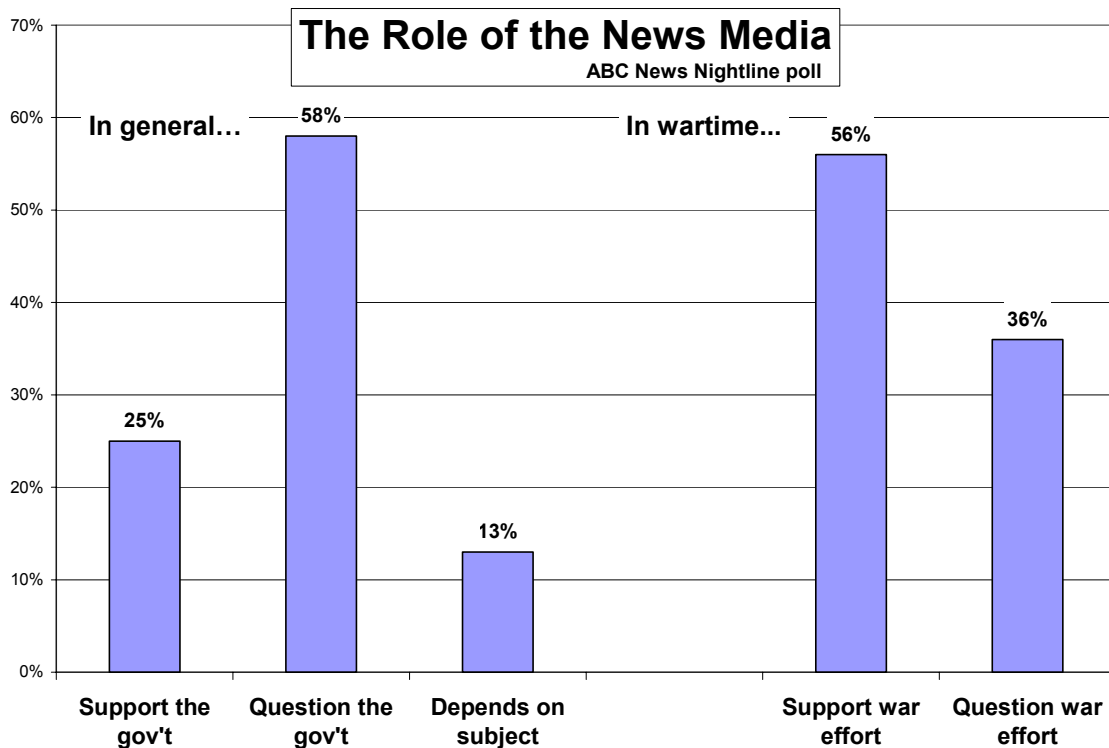
Which is more important:

The right to a free press	34%
The govt's ability to keep military secrets in wartime	60%

These views are premised on the special concerns associated with wartime. Outside of war, just 25 percent say the media's main obligation is to support what the government does; far more, 58 percent, say it's to question government activities (and 13 percent say it depends on the subject).

Similarly, 28 percent say that in general the government should have the right to control what information the media report, while again 58 percent oppose such constraints (and again 13 percent say it depends on the subject matter).

But in wartime these views change sharply. Fifty-six percent say the media is more obliged to support than to question how the government carries out a war. And by 66-31 percent the public says the government should have the right to prohibit media disclosure of military secrets.



In general, media should mainly

Support the gov't	25%
Question the gov't	58%
Depends on subject	13%

In wartime, media should mainly

Support gov't's war effort	56%
Question gov't's war effort	36%

Other polling has also shown the extent to which the public takes a flexible view of constitutional rights. Last year the organization Public Agenda found that Americans by a 3-1 margin said constitutional rights are not “complete and absolute,” but instead come with “limits and responsibilities.” And by 62-35 percent respondents said these rights were not meant never to change, but “were meant to change with the times.” Separately, a review of decades of past polling, by Robert J. Blendon and John M. Benson of Harvard University, found that public attitudes tend to swing away from unfettered rights in times of national crisis, and back again when crises pass.



HOW NOW – The news media get good marks for their current performance. In covering the possibility of war with Iraq, just 13 percent say the media have been too supportive of the Bush administration, and 17 percent say they’ve been too critical; rather, 61 percent say the media’s approach has been “about right” in balance. Views on coverage of the war on terrorism are very similar.

	Too supportive of Bush admin.	Too critical of Bush administration	About right
Media coverage of the war on terrorism	19%	15%	60%
Media coverage of possible war with Iraq	13%	17%	61%

PARTISANSHIP – There are partisan differences in these results. In the largest, Republicans are much more apt to say the government’s ability to keep military secrets in wartime is “essential” – 65 percent of Republicans say so, compared to 47 percent of independents and 38 percent of Democrats. It follows that Republicans are more apt to say that keeping military secrets is more important than ensuring press freedom in wartime – 76 percent of Republicans say so, compared to 55 percent of Democrats (still a majority) and 52 percent of independents.

Republicans also are less apt to say the media should be more questioning rather than supportive in their relationship with government – 44 percent of Republicans hold that view, compared to 67 percent of Democrats and six in 10 independents. And Republicans are more apt to say the media have been too critical of the administration in covering the situation with Iraq – but even among Republicans, just one-third hold this view.

	More important:	
	Right to a free press	Military secrets in wartime
Republicans	19%	76%
Democrats	41%	55%
Independents	42%	52%

	Media should mainly:	
	Support the gov’t	Question the gov’t
Republicans	39%	44%
Democrats	22%	67%
Independents	16%	61%

There are also regional and racial differences; Westerners, blacks and other nonwhites are much less apt than their counterparts to say the need for secrecy in wartime trumps press freedom.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News Nightline survey was conducted by telephone Jan. 8-12, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,037 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:  
<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Media Contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934

Full results follow.

1. How important to you is the right to a free press in this country - would you say it's essential, very important, somewhat important or not especially important?

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not especially important	No opinion
1/12/03	38%	49%	10%	3%	1%

2. In general, do you think the news media have more of an obligation to (support what the government does), or more of an obligation to (question what the government does)?

	Support	Question	Depends on the subject (vol.)	No opinion
1/12/03	25%	58%	13%	1%

3. In general, do you think the government should or should not have the right to control what information the news media can report?

	Should	Should not	Depends on the subject (vol.)	No opinion
1/12/03	28%	58%	13%	1%

4. How important to you is the government's ability to keep military secrets in wartime - would you say it's essential, very important, somewhat important or not especially important?

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not especially important	No opinion
1/12/03	49%	34%	13%	4%	1%

5. If you had to pick, which of these would you say is more important - (the right to a free press in this country) or (the government's ability to keep military secrets in wartime)?

	Right to a free press	Government's ability to keep military secrets in wartime	No opinion
1/12/03	34%	60%	6%

6. Specifically in a time of war, do you think the news media have more of an obligation to (support how the government carries out the war) or more of an obligation to (question how the government carries out the war)?

	Support	Question	No opinion
1/12/03	56%	36%	8%

7. Again, specifically in time of war, do you think the government should or should not have the right to prohibit the news media from reporting sensitive military information?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
1/12/03	66%	31%	4%

8a. (HALF SAMPLE) In covering the war on terrorism, do you think the news media have been (too supportive) of the Bush administration, (too critical) of the Bush administration, or about right?

	Too supportive	Too critical	About right	No opinion
1/12/03	19%	15%	60%	6%

8b. (OTHER HALF) In covering the possibility of war with Iraq, do you think the news media have been (too supportive) of the Bush administration, (too critical) of the Bush administration, or about right?

	Too supportive	Too critical	About right	No opinion
1/12/03	13%	17%	61%	9%

\*\*\*END\*\*\*

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